

6. Who is God?

Parasara Muni, a great sage and the father of Vyasadeva, who compiled all the Vedic literatures, gave the following definition of God:

aisvaryasya samagrasya / viryasya yasasah sriyah

Jnana-vairagyayos caiva / sannam bhaga itingana (Visnu Purana 6.5.47)

Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is thus defined by Parasara Muni as one who is full in six opulences--who has full strength, fame, wealth, knowledge, beauty, and renunciation.

Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the proprietor of all riches. There are many rich men in the world, but no one can claim that he possesses all the wealth. Nor can anyone claim that no one is richer than he. We understand from the Srimad-Bhagavatam, however, that when Krsna was present on this earth He had 16,108 wives, and each wife lived in a palace made of marble and bedecked with jewels. The rooms were filled with furniture made of ivory and gold, and there was great opulence everywhere. These descriptions are all given vividly in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. In the history of human society we cannot find anyone who had sixteen thousand wives or sixteen thousand palaces. Nor did Krsna go to one wife one day and another wife another day. No, He was personally present in every palace at the same time. This means that He expanded Himself in 16,108 forms. This is impossible for an ordinary man, but it is not very difficult for God. If God is unlimited, He can expand Himself in unlimited forms, otherwise there is no meaning to the word unlimited. God is omnipotent; He can maintain not only sixteen thousand wives but sixteen million and still encounter no difficulty, otherwise there is no meaning to the word omnipotent.

These are all attractive features. We experience in this material world that if a man is very rich, he is attractive. In America, for instance, Rockefeller and Ford are very attractive because of their riches. They are attractive even though they do not possess all the wealth of the world. How much more attractive, then, is God, who is the possessor of all riches.

Similarly, Krsna has unlimited strength. His strength was present from the moment of His birth. When Krsna was only three months old, the Putana demon attempted to kill Him, but instead she was killed by Krsna. That is God. God is God from the beginning. He does not become God by some meditation or mystic power. Krsna is not that type of God. Krsna was God from the very beginning of His appearance.

Krsna also has unlimited fame. Of course, we are devotees of Krsna & know of Him & glorify Him, but apart from us, many millions in the world are aware of the fame of the Bhagavad-gita. In all countries all over the world the Bhagavad-gita is read by philosophers, psychologists & religionists. We are also finding very good sales with our Bhagavad-gita As It Is. This is because the commodity is pure gold. There are many editions of the Gita, but they are not pure. Ours is selling more because we are presenting the Bhagavad-gita as it is. The fame of the Bhagavad-gita is Krsna's fame.

Beauty, another opulence, is possessed unlimitedly by Krsna. Krsna Himself is very beautiful, as are all His associates. Those who were pious in a previous life receive an opportunity in this material world to take birth in good families and good nations. The American people are very rich and beautiful, and these opulences are a result of pious activities. All over the world people are attracted to the Americans because they are advanced in scientific knowledge, riches, beauty, and so on. This planet is an insignificant planet within the universe, yet within this planet, one country--America--has so many attractive features. We can just imagine, then, how many attractive features must be possessed by God, who is the creator of the entire cosmic manifestation. How beautiful He must be--He who has created all beauty.

A person is attractive not only because of his beauty, but also because of his knowledge. A scientist or philosopher may be attractive because of his knowledge, but what knowledge is more sublime than that given by Krsna in the Bhagavad-gita? There is no comparison in the world to such knowledge. At the same time, Krsna possesses full renunciation (vairagya). So many things are working under Krsna's direction in this material world, but actually Krsna is not present here. A big factory may continue to work, although the owner may not be present. Similarly, Krsna's potencies are working under the direction of His assistants, the demigods. Thus Krsna Himself is aloof from the material world. This is all described in the revealed scriptures.

God, therefore, has many names according to His activities, but because He possesses so many opulences, and because with these opulences He attracts everyone, He is called Kṛṣṇa. The Vedic literature asserts that God has many names, but "Kṛṣṇa" is the principal name.

Actually God has no particular name. By saying He has no name, we mean that no one knows how many names He has. Since God is unlimited, His names also must be unlimited. Therefore we cannot settle on one name. For instance, Kṛṣṇa is sometimes called Yasoda-nandana, the son of mother Yasoda; or Devaki-nandana, the son of Devaki; or Vasudeva-nandana, the son of Vasudeva; or Nandanandana, the son of Nanda. Sometimes He is called Parthasarathi, indicating that He acted as the charioteer of Arjuna, who is sometimes called Partha, the son of Prtha.

God has many dealings with His many devotees, and according to those dealings, He is called certain names. Since He has innumerable devotees and innumerable relations with them, He also has innumerable names. We cannot hit on any one name. But the name Kṛṣṇa means "all-attractive." God attracts everyone; that is the definition of God. We have seen many pictures of Kṛṣṇa, and we see that He attracts the cows, calves, birds, beasts, trees, plants, and even the water in Vṛndavana. He is attractive to the cowherd boys, to the gopis, to Nanda Maharaja, to the Pandavas, and to all human society. Therefore if any particular name can be given to God, that name is "Kṛṣṇa." (Adapted from Science of Self Realization)

Discovery

1. What is the definition of *Bhagavan*?
2. What does 'Kṛṣṇa' mean?

Understanding

Explain how each opulence is applicable to Kṛṣṇa

Application

Is Kṛṣṇa a sectarian name?

SRI NAMAMRTA

The Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement is killing the demoniac mentality of the people by the chanting of the holy name

Whenever God incarnates He has two missions, as stated in the Bhagavad-gita. There Kṛṣṇa says, "Whenever I appear, My mission is to deliver the pious devotees and to annihilate the demons." When Kṛṣṇa appeared, He had to kill many demons. If we see a picture of Viṣṇu we will notice that He has a conchshell, lotus flower, club, & disc. These last two items are meant for killing demons. Within this world there are two classes of men—the demons and the devotees. The devotees are called demigods; they are almost like God because they have godly qualities. Those who are devotees are called godly persons, and those who are nondevotees, atheists, are called demons. So Kṛṣṇa, or God, comes with two missions: to give protection to the devotees and to destroy the demons. In this age Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission is also like that: to deliver the devotees and annihilate the nondevotees, the demons. But in this age He has a different weapon. That weapon is not a club or disc or lethal weapon—His weapon is saṅkīrtana movement. He killed the demoniac mentality of the people by introducing the saṅkīrtana movement. That is the specific significance of Lord Caitanya. In this age people are already killing themselves. They have discovered atomic weapons with which to kill themselves, so there is no need for God to kill them. But He appeared to kill their demoniac mentality. That is possible by this Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement. (Adapted from the Science of Self-Realization)

PREACHING IS THE ESSENCE

Readers of Kṛṣṇa literature can attain the ultimate goal of human life:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is always full of six opulences—namely complete wealth, complete strength, complete fame, complete knowledge, complete beauty and complete renunciation. The Lord appears in different complete, eternal forms of incarnation. The conditioned soul has immense opportunity to hear about the transcendental activities of the Lord in these different incarnations. In the Bhagavad-gita it is said, **janma karma me divyam** [Bg. 4.9]. The pastimes and activities of the Lord are not material; they are beyond the material conception. But the conditioned soul can benefit by hearing such uncommon activities. Hearing is an opportunity to associate with the Lord; to hear His activities is to evolve to the transcendental nature—simply by hearing. The conditioned soul has a natural aptitude to hear something about other conditioned souls in the form of fiction, drama and novel. That inclination to hear something about others may be utilized in hearing the pastimes of the

Lord. Then one can immediately evolve to his transcendental nature. Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are not only beautiful; they are also very pleasing to the mind. If someone takes advantage of hearing the pastimes of the Lord, the material contamination of dust, accumulated in the heart due to long association with material nature, can be immediately cleansed.... Conditional life is due to this contamination only, and as soon as it is cleared off, then naturally the dormant function of the living entity—rendering service to the Lord—awakens. By developing his eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord, one becomes eligible to create friendship with the devotees. Mahārāja Parīkṣit recommended, from practical experience, that everyone try to hear about the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. This Kṛṣṇa treatise is meant for that purpose, and the reader may take advantage in order to attain the ultimate goal of human life.

(Kṛṣṇa, Chapter 7)